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SUPPLEMENT TO
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1. Attempts by representatives of the Venezuelan Ministry of Labor to form worker syndicates in the Bolivar coastal area oil fields have met with some success. One such government-sponsored union, the Sindicato de Trabajadores Libres de la Industria Petrolera (STLIP), was legalized by the Inspector of Labor only one week after syndicate organizers appeared in the area.
2. A government-sponsored syndicate is in the process of being formed in the Tia Juana camp of the Creole Petroleum Corporation, but has not as yet been formally legalized. So far the syndicate has approximately 40 members, 15 of whom are laborers employed by a firm which has just completed its contract work for Creole. This embryonic union has taken advantage of the labor code regulations and, although not recognized by the Labor Inspector as a legal syndicate, has been able to demand that the 15 workers employed by the private contractor receive the payroll even though the job for which they were hired has been completed. The union's appeal to the Labor Inspector was based on that section of the labor code which in effect prevents an employer from discharging an employee if said employee is a member of a syndicate which, although not legal, is in the process of obtaining legalization from the Inspector of Labor.
3. Considerable opposition to the new syndicates has been observed both in Cabinas and Lagunillas. Two Union Republicana Democratica affiliates, the Union de Obreros y Empleados Petroleros de Cabinas and the Organizacion Sindical de Trabajadores de Lagunillas, have expressed their disapproval of the STLIP and are very bitter at the attempts of the Ministry of Labor to form worker syndicates. Their protests took the form of a handbill which is indicative of the growing opposition to the government action.

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Next Review Date: 2008